Battle Monument,

WEST POINT.

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BATTLE MONUMENT:

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT TO THE DEDICATION OF THE SITE,

JUNE 15TH, 1864.

Oration of Maj.-Gen. McClellan.

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HISTORY OF THE PROJECT.

The officers of the army stationed at West Point, N. Y., conscious of the propriety of providing some permanent memento for their fallen comrades, and realizing the necessity of initiating some project to ensure this end, effected in October last, upon the suggestion of First Lieut. H. C. Hasbrouck, 4th U. S. Artillery, and after consultation, an organization, as follows:

An Executive Committee was constituted, consisting of

Col. A. H. Bowman, U. S. Engineers, President.
Prof. A. E. Church, U. S. Military Academy, Treasurer.
First Lieut. Chas. C. Parsons, 4th U. S. Artillery, Secretary.
H. B. Clitz, Lieut. Col. and Commandant of Cadets.
W. P. Chambliss, Capt. 5th Cavalry.
S. V. Benet, Capt. Ordnance Corps.
H. B. Noble, First Lieut. 8th Infantry.
M. D. McAlester, Capt. Engineers.
L. Lorain, Capt. 3d Artillery.
A. T. Smith, Capt. 8th Infantry.
W. A. Elderkin, First Lieut. 1st Artillery.

Capt. Benét being subsequently ordered elsewhere, his place was supplied by Capt. T. J. Treadwell, Ordnance Corps, and Dr. E. S. Dunster was added, to represent the Medical Corps.

The Executive Committee, after procuring from the Hon. the Secretary of War permission to erect the proposed monument at West Point, sent forth to commanding generals of the army and others a circular describing their purpose and soliciting co-operation. The most favorable replies were speedily received from the following officers:

Lieut.-Gen. Grant, Maj.-Gens. McClellan, Wool, Thomas, Buell, Hooker, Meade, and Brig.-Gen. Meigs.

Thus satisfied that they were in some degree warranted in acting for the army, the committee published, and through favor of the War Department distributed, the following circular:

"WEST POINT, N. Y., *Jan.* 18, 1864.

"SIR: In response to what is believed to be the wish of all who have an interest in the subject, the officers now stationed at West Point have effected an organization for the purpose of erecting at that post a Monument, to be called The Battle Monument, upon which shall be inscribed the names of all officers of the Regular Army who, during the present war, shall have been killed, or died of wounds received, in the field, and which shall also contain a Tablet dedicated to the memory of all enlisted men who shall have fallen under like circumstances.

"It is not deemed necessary that any elaborate argument should set forth the propriety of earnest action in behalf of this object. It is an admitted fact, that while in other countries and other ages, places are assigned in the historic mausoleum of the nation's illustrious dead for those who have fallen for the public good, the soldiers of the American Army are often permitted to rest among the unknown dead, while their names find no place in the annals of the stormy scenes in which, perhaps, they were the most exalted actors.

"Is it not fit, therefore, that at West Point, the great central post around which cluster some of the richest associations of the Regular Army—to which would cheerfully resort all who wish to pay a tribute to the gallant dead—under the shadow of the Academy which at last receives her sons and all who fight, or fall beside them, should be erected a monument which shall supply the want that now exists?

"To the dead, it would offer the grateful homage of fraternal hearts—to the living, still another inspiration to heroic virtues and sublime self-devotion.

"The plan of action that is proposed has been carefully sought out, and it is trusted that, with a favorable response, a sufficient sum may be raised to make the Battle Monument, n design and durability, entirely worthy of its purpose.

"It seems unnecessary that those who have undertaken to initiate this project should disavow any undue assumption in regard to it, since they earnestly ask from their brother officers in the field, or elsewhere, such instructions or suggestions as may tend to forward the purpose that is held in view.

"For the purpose of indicating a standard of subscription, the following rates are proposed, every one, however, will feel at liberty to offer a greater or less sum, as circumstances permit:

Maj.-Gen.	$27 00	Major	$10 00
Brig.-Gen.	18 00	Captain	8 00
Colonel	13 00	Lieut	7 00
Lieut.-Col.	11 00	Enlisted Men....each	1 00

(Approximating to 6 per cent. of monthly pay, for one month.)

Besides your personal subscription, your co-operation with your associates in the field is also solicited, since this circular may not otherwise reach them on account of the difficulty of obtaining correct addresses.

Should subscriptions be forwarded in AGGREGATE, the officer so forwarding will please enclose the names of the several subscribers. Subscriptions may be remitted to the Treasurer,

(Signed, &c.) Prof. A. E. CHURCH, West Point, N. Y.

The response to this appeal was general, prompt and earnest. Among those of our general officers who gave earliest tribute to the gallant who had fallen under their command, or been of their number, were Major-Gens. Sedgwick, Sykes, Sherman, Augur, Pope, Wright, Curtiss, Doubleday, Heintzleman, Pleasonton, Peck, Hitchcock, Gibbon, Reynolds, Franklin, Howard, McCook, Granger, Brookes, Keyes, Foster, Gillmore, Butterfield, French, Butler, McDowell, and Brig.-Gens. Wright, Paul, Hawkins, Delafield, Wessells, Barry, De Russey, Sherman, Ramsay, Hunt, Cooke, Pitcher, Hays, Ingalls, Grainger, Newton, Cullum, Wheaton, Ames, Kilpatrick, Totten, Williams, and Ricketts, and to these may be added the hearty tributes from the field, staff and line officers

throughout every division of the army, and the no less welcome contributions of many enlisted men.

A circular, inviting designs for the Monument, was prepared by the committee; and to secure competition, a premium of $250 was offered for that which shall finally be accepted.

It seemed proper, as the project progressed and attained the promise of complete success, that a site should be chosen and set apart to be ever after recognized as the honored shrine of our noble dead.

The committee, therefore, after selecting Trophy Point, upon the northern brow of the plain, as such site, designated the 15th of June, 1864, as a day for its dedication. Major-Gen. McClellan was requested to deliver the oration, Brig.-Gen. Anderson officiated as chief marshal, and Rev. Drs. French and Sprole as chaplains.

The following is the record of proceedings for that day. Its interest was heightened by the presence of the shattered but still steady remnants of the 3d, 6th, 7th, and 12th Regiments U. S. Infantry, the bands of these and of the 5th Artillery, and the permanent party of Fort Columbus, N. Y. Harbor, preceded in procession by the U. S. corps of Cadets and the Military Academy band.

It was also distinguished throughout by that deep solemnity of feeling which was eminently due to the occasion.

West Point, *June* 15, 1864.

PROGRAMME OF CEREMONIES.

PROCESSION.

Assistant-Marshal.—Capt. Wilkins, 3d Infantry.

1. Military Academy Band.
2. Battalion of Cadets.

Assistant-Marshal.—Capt. Smith, 8th Infantry.

3. Detachments of Troops, Stationed at and Visiting the Post.
4. Carriage containing the President of the Executive Committee, the Chief Marshal, and State Executives.

Assistant-Marshal.—Lieut. Hamilton, 2d Artillery.

5. Senior Member of the Committee, Orator, and Chaplains.
6. The Executive Committee.
7. Military and Academic Staff, Board of Visitors, and Invited Guests.

Assistant-Marshals. { Capt. Davies, 16th Infantry. / Capt. Barlow, Engineers.

PROCEEDINGS.

1. Prayer.....Rev. Dr. French
2. Music—Hail Columbia.....Military Academy Band
3. Oration.....Maj. Gen. McClellan
4. Music—Star-Spangled Banner & Yankee-Doodle...M. A. Band
5. Benediction.....Rev. Dr. Sprole
6. Dirge.....Military Academy Band

PRAYERS.

1.

FOR THE COUNTRY.

Almighty God, fountain of order, source of all law, in heaven and in earth, who hast ordained that men shall exist in organized communities, who, in the days of our fathers, didst bring forth, in the hour of darkness, the starry order of American institutions, for which we praise and bless Thee, we commend our country, now and ever, with all its interests, to Thy protecting care. May Thy fatherly hand ever be extended for perpetual benedictions, over this land, kept by Thee, through ages for us; over its people, trained by Thee so long for a sublime vocation; its Constitution, fruit of Thy teachings in history; its Union, blending human diversities into one chorus, acceptable to Thee, the lover of concord; and its laws, uniting, after the model of Thine, mercy with justice, and liberty with order. From thine own deeps of purity and love, breathe into the whole American people, by Thy spirit, and through all subduing charity, that sacred affection, love to our country. Remove for ever from them, the spirit of sedition, conspiracy, rebellion, and give them steadfast loyalty, and unswerving allegiance.

Specially do we implore Thee thus to turn the hearts of those who are now in arms against authority. In the contest to which we have been summoned for defending the precious trusts handed on from our fathers, wilt Thou send us now prosperity, and grant us victory. O, let not the impassioned yearnings of a great people for unity, for nationality, for beneficent order, for a lasting tranquillity, be in vain. May their lavish sacrifices, their patriotic efforts, their patient endurances, their silent tears falling in so many saddened homesteads, not be fruitless, but be regarded by Thee, through thy Son, for benedictions, and by distant posterities, blessed through them, for abundant honor. So may we be through coming time, one people, fearing Thee and working righteousness, glorifying Thy name, and elevating Thy whole human family. All which we ask through Jesus Christ our Saviour. *Amen.*

2.

FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND ALL OTHERS IN AUTHORITY.

O, everlasting God, by whose eternal providence all things and all men have their stations and their works, wherein they may serve Thee, and do good to Thy creatures, we ask for Thy blessing on the President of the United States, and all others in authority. Called by Thee to great duties, may they find in Thee strength and wisdom for all. Bestow upon them all good gifts for government; inspire them with wisest counsels and heroic reso-

lutions. Console them in their difficult tasks with the consciousness, of duty done, of intentions sincerely placed on the public welfare, justice, and honor; of the sympathy of upright men; of the appreciation of other ages; and of Thine own merciful yet forgiving approval. In this life, may Thy providence guard them. In mortal scenes may Thy spirit so guide them, that they may hereafter serve and glorify Thee in a better country that is an heavenly; through Him who taught the rules and procured the spirit for all human duties, our teacher, our model, our restorer, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

8.

FOR THE ARMY AND NAVY AND THEIR SCHOOLS.

Lord God of hosts, who hast determined the union of power with law through all thy works, and for all communities of men, be pleased to receive into thy almighty and most gracious protection, the Army and the Navy of the United States. Fill the whole public force with the spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice, with an inspiring conviction of the glory of the cause for which it is now called to dare and to endure. May its persons be defended by Thee in danger, and encouraged to all deeds of heroism by the affection and honor of grateful countrymen. And may both its schools be the nurseries of pure, accomplished, and brave men, and be continually sending forth on land and sea those who may render, in peace and war, good and faithful ser-

vice to the public. So may the people of our land, under the shelter of good laws, in peace and quietness, serve thee our God, and lead lives of all godliness and honesty, to the glory of Thy name, and the promotion of human welfare, through Him who gave the example of self-sacrifice, dying for us that we might live with Thee, thy Son, our Saviour. *Amen.*

4.

FOR A BLESSING ON THE OCCASION.

O God of the spirits of all flesh, calling the generations from the beginning, and, since the first transgression, bidding dust return to dust again, may this spot, consecrated now to the memory of heroes, be hallowed also to the benefit of the living. May those brought here for their last repose, be the temples of thy Holy Spirit, and leave spotless records of lives made glorious by duty conscientiously done, so that the wayfarer, lingering and musing here, may find his soul enkindled to ennobling emulations. And may this whole assembly look this day from the grave to the life immortal. Here, in a temple not made with hands, where the mountains rise, the river flows, the valley slumbers, all telling of Thee and of Thy unspeakable perfection, may thoughts arise within us answering to the majesty of Thy glorious works. Here may we consecrate ourselves anew to the love of Thee, the love of man, the love of Thy will ; to the doing of justice, to the loving of mercy, and to

walking humbly with Thee our God : that so, when we too shall lie down in the dust, we may be Thy children, justified, sanctified, and prepared to be glorified, all through Him who has opened the way to Thee, and who, to inbreathe these great affections, has taught us when we pray to say

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation : But deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

After the prayer, Prof. French said :

"I am requested on behalf of the officers of the army, and of the local authorities and residents, to express their sentiments and wishes, and most earnestly to ask that these may be respected. To all of us, the day is a solemn one ; to military feelings ever confronted with death, the occasion is the same as though cherished comrades were now to be laid in the grave. They ask therefore, that this hour and this day may be invested with the decorum attached to funeral solemnities—that no demonstration of any kind be made on the ground or afterward, but that all may enter into the spirit and motive of the solemn occasion which calls us here in reverence, before Almighty God, to set apart a por-

tion of his footstool for the remains of those who shall fall in this war in the defence of the Constitution, the Union, the welfare, and the national honor of the United States.

Gen. ANDERSON'S introduction of the orator :

Fellow-citizens, members of the corps of cadets, and brother soldiers, I have the pleasure of going through the form of introducing to you one who is better known to you than I who introduce him. The orator of the day, Major General GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN.

ORATION

BY

GENERAL GEORGE B. McCLELLAN.

All nations have days sacred to the remembrance of joy and of grief. They have thanksgivings for success, fasting and prayers in the hour of humiliation and defeat, triumphs and pæans to greet the living and laurel-crowned victor. They have obsequies and eulogies for the warrior slain on the field of battle. Such is the duty we are to perform to-day. The poetry, the histories, the orations of antiquity, all resound with the clang of arms; they dwell rather upon rough deeds of war, than the gentle arts of peace. They have preserved to us the names of heroes, and the memory of their deeds, even to this distant day. Our own Old Testament teems with the narrations of the brave actions and heroic deaths of Jewish patriots, while the New Testament of our meek and suffering Saviour, often selects the soldier and his weapons, to typify and illustrate religious heroism and duty. These stories of the actions of the dead, have frequently survived in the lapse of ages, the names of those whose fall was thus commemorated centuries ago. But, although we know

not now the names of all the brave men who fought and fell upon the plain of Marathon, in the pass of Thermopylæ, and on the hills of Palestine, we have not lost the memory of their examples. As long as the warm blood courses the veins of man, as long as the human heart beats high and quick at the recital of brave deeds and patriotic sacrifices, so long will the lesson still incite generous men to emulate the heroism of the past.

Among the Greeks, it was the custom that the fathers of the most valiant of the slain should pronounce the eulogies of the dead. Sometimes it devolved upon their great statesmen and orators to perform this mournful duty. Would that a new Demosthenes, or a second Pericles could arise and take my place to-day, for he would find a theme worthy of his most brilliant powers, of his most touching eloquence. I stand here now, not as an orator, but as a whilom commander, and in the place of the fathers of the most valiant dead. As their comrade, too, on many a hard-fought field against domestic and foreign foe—in early youth and mature manhood—moved by all the love that David felt when he poured forth his lamentations for the mighty father and son who fell on Mount Gilboa. God knows that David's love for Jonathan was no more deep than mine for the tried friends of many long and eventful years, whose names are to be recorded upon the structure that is to rise upon this spot. Would that his more than mortal eloquence could grace my lips and do justice to the theme!

We have met to-day, my comrades, to do honor to our own dead; brothers united to us by the closest and dearest ties, who have freely given their lives for their country in this war—so just and righteous, so long as its purpose is to crush rebellion, and to save our nation from the infinite evils of dismemberment. Such an occasion as this should call forth the deepest and noblest emotions of our nature—pride, sorrow, and prayer; pride that our country has possessed such sons; sorrow that she has lost them; prayer that she may have others like them; that we and our successors may adorn her annals as they have done, and that when our parting hour arrives, whenever and however it may be, our souls may be prepared for the great change.

We have assembled to consecrate a cenotaph, which shall remind our children's children, in the distant future, of their fathers' struggles in the days of the great rebellion. This monument is to perpetuate the memory of a portion only of those who have fallen for the nation in this unhappy war—it is dedicated to the officers and soldiers of the regular army. Yet this is done in no class or exclusive spirit, and in the act we remember with reverence and love, our comrades of the volunteers, who have so gloriously fought and fallen by our sides. Each state will, no doubt, commemorate in some fitting way the services of its sons, who abandoned the avocations of peace and shed their blood in the ranks of the volunteers. How richly they have earned a nation's love, a nation's gratitude, with what heroism

they have confronted death, have wrested victory from a stubborn foe, and have illustrated defeat, it well becomes me to say, for it has been my lot to command them on many a sanguinary field. I know that I but echo the feeling of the regulars, when I award the high credit they deserve to their brave brethren of the volunteers.

But we of the regular army have no states to look to for the honors due our dead. We belong to the whole country, and can neither expect nor desire the general government to make, a perhaps invidious distinction in our favor. We are few in number, a small band of comrades, united by peculiar and very binding ties; for with many of us our friendships were commenced in boyhood, when we rested here in the shadow of the granite hills which look down upon us where we stand; with others the ties of brotherhood were formed in more mature years, while fighting among the rugged mountains and the fertile valleys of Mexico—within hearing of the eternal waves of the Pacific, or in the lonely grandeur of the great plains of the far West. With all, our love and confidence have been cemented by common dangers and sufferings, on the toilsome march, in the dreary bivouac, and amid the clash of arms, and in the presence of death on scores of battle-fields. West Point, with her large heart, adopts us all—graduates and those appointed from civil life, officers and privates. In her eyes we are all her children, jealous of her fame, and eager to sustain her world-wide reputation. Generals and private soldiers, men who

have cheerfully offered our all for our dear country, we stand here before this shrine, ever hereafter sacred to our dead, equals and brothers in the presence of the common death which awaits us all, perhaps on the same field and at the same hour. Such are the ties which unite us, the most endearing which exist among men ; such the relations which bind us together, the closest of the sacred brotherhood of arms.

It has therefore seemed, and it is fitting, that we should erect upon this spot, so sacred to us all, an enduring monument to our dear brothers who have preceded us on the path of peril and of honor, which it is the destiny of many of us to tread.

What is this regular army to which we belong ?

Who were the men whose death merits such honors from the living ?

What is the cause for which they have laid down their lives ?

Our regular or permanent army is the nucleus which, in time of peace, preserves the military traditions of the nation, as well as the organization, science and instruction indispensable to modern armies. It may be regarded as co-eval with the nation. It derives its origin from the old continental and state lines of the Revolution, whence, with some interruptions and many changes, it has attained its present condition. In fact, we may with propriety go even beyond the Revolution to seek the roots of our genealogical tree in the old French wars, for the Cis-Atlantic campaigns of the seven years' war were

not confined to the "red men scalping each other by the great lakes of North America," and it was in them that our ancestors first participated as Americans in the large operations of civilized armies. American regiments then fought on the banks of the St. Lawrence and the Ohio, on the shores of Ontario and Lake George, on the islands of the Caribbean and in South America. Louisburgh, Quebec, Duquesne, the Moro, and Porto Bello, attest the value of the provincial troops, and in that school were educated such soldiers as WASHINGTON, PUTNAM, LEE, MONTGOMERY, and GATES. These and men like GREENE, KNOX, WAYNE, and STEUBEN, were the fathers of our permanent army, and under them our troops acquired that discipline and steadiness which enabled them to meet upon equal terms, and often to defeat, the tried veterans of England. The study of the history of the Revolution, and a perusal of the despatches of WASHINGTON, will convince the most skeptical of the value of the permanent army in achieving our independence and establishing the civil edifice which we are now fighting to preserve.

The war of 1812 found the army on a footing far from adequate to the emergency, but it was rapidly increased, and of the new generation of soldiers many proved equal to the requirements of the occasion. Lundy's Lane, Chippewa, Queenstown, Plattsburgh, New Orleans—all bear witness to the gallantry of the regulars.

Then came an interval of more than thirty years

of external peace, marked by many changes in the organization and strength of the regular army, and broken at times by tedious and bloody Indian wars. Of these the most remarkable were the Black Hawk war, in which our troops met unflinchingly a foe as relentless, and far more destructive than the Indians —that terrible scourge, the cholera ; and the tedious Florida war, where for so many years, the Seminoles eluded in the pestilential swamps our utmost efforts, and in which were displayed such traits of heroism as that commemorated by yonder monument to DADE and his command, "when all fell, save three, without an attempt to retreat." At last came the Mexican war, to replace Indian combats and the monotony of the frontier service, and for the first time in many years the mass of the regular army was concentrated, and took the principal part in the battles of that remarkable and romantic war. Palo Alto, Resaca, and Fort Brown, were the achievements of the regulars unaided, and as to the battles of Monterey, Buena Vista, Vera Cruz, Cerre Gordo, and the final triumphs in the valley, none can truly say that they could have been won without the regulars. When peace crowned our victories in the capital of the Montezumas, the army was at once dispersed over the long frontier, and engaged in harassing and dangerous wars with the Indians of the plains. Thus thirteen long years were spent, until the present war broke out, and the mass of the army was drawn in, to be employed against a domestic foe.

I cannot proceed to the events of the recent past and the present without adverting to the gallant men who were so long of our number, but who have now gone to their last home, for no small portion of the glory of which we boast was reflected from such men as TAYLOR, WORTH, BRADY, BROOKS, TOTTEN, and DUNCAN.

There is a sad story of Venetian history that has moved many a heart, and often employed the poet's pen and the painter's pencil. It is of an old man whose long life was gloriously spent in the service of the state as a warrior and a statesman, and who, when his hair was white and his feeble limbs could scarce carry his bent form toward the grave, attained the highest honors that a Venetian citizen could reach. He was Doge of Venice. Convicted of treason against the state, he not only lost his life, but suffered beside a penalty which will endure as long as the name of Venice is remembered. The spot where his portrait should have hung in the great hall of the doge's palace was veiled with black, and there still remains the frame, with its black mass of canvas—and this vacant frame is the most conspicuous in the long line of effigies of illustrious doges !

Oh ! that such a pall as that which replaces the portrait of MARINO FALIERO could conceal from history the names of those, once our comrades, who are now in arms against the flag under which we fought side by side in years gone by. But no veil can cover the anguish that fills our hearts when we look back upon the sad memory of the past, and re-

call the affection and respect we entertained toward men against whom it is our duty to act in mortal combat. Would that the courage, ability, and steadfastness, they displayed, had been employed in the defence of the "Stars and Stripes," against a foreign foe, rather than in this gratuitous and unjustifiable rebellion, which could not be so long maintained but for the skill and energy of those, our former comrades.

But we have reason to rejoice that upon this day, so sacred and so eventful for us, one grand old mortal monument of the past still lifts high his head amongst us, and graces by his presence the consecration of this tomb of his children. We may well be proud that we have been commanded by the hero who purchased victory with his blood near the great waters of Niagara, who repeated and eclipsed the the achievements of CORTEZ ; who, although a consummate and confident commander, ever preferred, when duty and honor would permit, the olive branch of peace to the blood-stained laurels of war, and who stands, at the close of a long, glorious, and eventful life, a living column of granite against which have beaten in vain alike the blandishments, and the storms of treason. His name will ever be one of our proudest boasts and most moving inspirations. In long-distant ages, when this incipient monument has become venerable, moss-clad, and perhaps ruinous, when the names inscribed upon it shall seem to those who pause to read them, indistinct mementoes of an almost mythical past, the

name of WINFIELD SCOTT will still be clear cut upon the memory of them all, like the still fresh carving upon the monuments of long-forgotten Pharaohs.

But it is time to approach the present.

In the war which now shakes the land to its foundation, the regular army has borne a most honorable part. Too few in numbers to act by themselves, regular regiments have participated in every great battle in the East, and in most of those west of the Alleghanies. Their terrible losses and diminished numbers prove that they have been in the thickest of the fights, and the testimony of their comrades and commanders show with what undaunted heroism they have upheld their ancient renown. Their vigorous charges have often won the day, and in defeat they have more than once saved the army from destruction or terrible losses by the obstinacy with which they resisted overpowering numbers. They can refer with pride to the part they played upon the glorious fields of Mexico, and exult at the recollection of what they did at Manassas, Gaines' Mill, Malvern, Antietam, Shiloh, Stone River, Gettysburgh, and the great battles just fought from the Rapidan to the Chickahominy. They can also point to the officers who have risen among them and achieved great deeds for their country in this war ;— to the living warriors whose names are on the nation's tongue and heart, too numerous to be repeated here, yet not one of whom I could willingly omit.

But perhaps the proudest episode in the history of the regular army is that touching instance of fidelity on the part of the non-commissioned officers and privates, who, treacherously made prisoners in Texas, resisted every temptation to violate their oath and desert their flag. Offered commissions in the rebel service, money and land freely tendered them, they all scorned the inducements held out to them, submitted to every hardship, and when at last exchanged, avenged themselves on the field of battle for the unavailing insult offered their integrity. History affords no brighter example of honor than that of these brave men, tempted, as I blush to say they were, by some of their former officers, who, having themselves proved false to their flag, endeavored to seduce the men who had often followed them in combat, and who had naturally regarded them with respect and love.

Such is the regular army—such its history and antecedents—such its officers and men. It needs no herald to trumpet forth its praises ; it can proudly appeal to the numerous fields, from the tropics to the frozen banks of the St. Lawrence, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, fertilized by the blood and whitened by the bones of its members. But I will not pause to eulogize it. Let its deeds speak for it ; they are more eloquent than tongue of mine.

Why are we here to-day ?

This is not the funeral of one brave warrior, nor even of the harvest of death on a single battle-field, but these are the obsequies of the best and bravest

of the children of the land, who have fallen in actions almost numberless, many of them among the most sanguinary and desperate of which history bears record. The men, whose names and deeds we now seek to perpetuate, rendering them the highest honor in our power, have fallen wherever armed rebellion showed its front—in far distant New Mexico, in the broad valley of the Mississippi, on the bloody hunting-grounds of Kentucky, in the mountains of Tennessee, amid the swamps of Carolina, on the fertile fields of Maryland, and in the blood-stained thickets of Virginia. They were of all the grades —from the general officer to the private ; of all ages—from the grayhaired veteran of fifty years' service, to the beardless youth ; of all degrees of cultivation—from the man of science to the uneducated boy. It is not necessary, nor is it possible, to repeat the mournful yet illustrious roll of dead heroes whom we have met to honor. Nor shall I attempt to name all of those who most merit praise —simply a few who will exemplify the classes to which they belong.

Among the last slain, but among the first in honor and reputation, was that hero of twenty battles —JOHN SEDGWICK—gentle and kind as a woman, brave as a brave man can be, honest, sincere, and able—he was a model that all may strive to imitate, but whom few can equal. In the terrible battles which just preceded his death, he had occasion to display the highest qualities of a commander and a soldier ; yet after escaping the stroke of death when

men fell around him by thousands, he at last met his fate at a moment of comparative quiet, by the ball of a single rifleman. He died as a soldier would choose to die—with truth in his heart, and a sweet, tranquil smile upon his face. Alas! our great nation possesses few such sons like true JOHN SEDGWICK.

Like him fell, too, at the very head of their corps, the white-haired MANSFIELD, after a long career of usefulness, illustrated by his skill and cool courage at Fort Brown, Monterey and Buena Vista—JOHN F. REYNOLDS and RENO, both in the full vigor of manhood and intellect—men who have proved their ability and chivalry on many a field in Mexico, and in this civil war, gallant gentlemen of whom their country had much to hope, had it pleased God to spare their lives. LYON fell in the prime of life, leading his little army against superior numbers, his brief career affording a brilliant example of patriotism and ability. The impetuous KEARNEY, and such brave generals as RICHARDSON, WILLIAMS, TERRILL, STEVENS, WEED, STRONG, SAUNDERS, and HAYES, lost their lives while in the midst of a career of usefulness. Young BAYARD, so like the most renowned of his name, that "knight above fear and above reproach," was cut off too early for his country, and that excellent staff-officer Colonel GARESCHÉ fell while gallantly doing his duty.

No regiments can spare such gallant, devoted and able commanders as ROSSELL, DAVIS, GOVE, SIMMONS, BAILEY, PUTNAM and KINGSBURY—all of

whom fell in the thickest of the combat—some of them veterans, and others young in service, all good men and well-beloved.

Our batteries have partially paid their terrible debt to fate in the loss of such commanders as GREBLE, the first to fall in this war, BENSON, HAZZARD, SMEAD, DE HART, HAZLITT, and those gallant boys, KIRBY, WOODRUFF, DIMMICK, and CUSHING; while the engineers lament the promising and gallant WAGNER and CROSS.

Beneath remote battlefields rest the corpses of the heroic MCREA, REED, BASCOM, STONE, SWEET, and many other company officers.

Besides these were hosts of veteran sergeants, corporals and privates, who had fought under SCOTT in Mexico, or contended in many combats with the savages of the far West and Florida, and, mingled with them, young soldiers who, courageous, steady, and true, met death unflinchingly, without the hope of personal glory. These men, in their more humble sphere, served their country with as much faith and honor as the most illustrious generals, and all of them with perfect singleness of heart. Although their names may not live in history, their actions, loyalty, and courage, will live. Their memories will long be preserved in their regiments, for there were many of them who merited as proud a distinction as that accorded to the "first grenadier of France," or to that other Russian soldier who gave his life for his comrades.

But there is another class of men who have gone

from us since this war commenced, whose fate it was not to die in battle, but who are none the less entitled to be mentioned here. There was SUMNER, a brave, honest, chivalrous veteran, of more than half a century's service, who had confronted death unflinchingly on scores of battlefields, had shown his gray head serene and cheerful, where death most revelled, who more than once told me that he believed and hoped that his long career would end amid the din of battle—he died at home from the effects of the hardships of his campaigns.

That most excellent soldier, the elegant C. F. SMITH, whom many of us remember to have seen so often on this plain, with his superb bearing, escaped the bullet to fall a victim to the disease which has deprived the army of so many of its best soldiers.

JOHN BUFORD, cool and intrepid ; MITCHELL, eminent in science ; PLUMMER, PALMER, and many other officers and men, lost their lives by sickness contracted in the field.

But I cannot close this long list of glorious martyrs without paying a sacred debt of official duty and personal friendship. There was one dead soldier who possessed peculiar claims upon my love and gratitude. He was an ardent patriot, an unselfish man, a true soldier, the beau ideal of a staff officer—he was my aide-de-camp, Colonel COLBURN.

There is a lesson to be drawn from the death and services of these glorious men which we should read for the present and future benefit of the nation. War in these modern days is a science, and it should

now be clear to the most prejudiced that for the organization and command of armies, and the high combinations of strategy, perfect familiarity with the theoretical science of war is requisite. To count upon success when the plans or execution of campaigns are intrusted to men who have no knowledge of war, is as idle as to expect the legal wisdom of a STORY or a KENT from a skilful physician.

But what is the honorable and holy cause for which these men laid down their lives, and for which the nation still demands the sacrifice of the precious blood of so many of her children ?

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary war, it was found that the confederacy, which had grown up during that memorable contest, was fast falling to pieces from its own weight. The central power was too weak ; it could only recommend to the different states such measures as seemed best ; and it possessed no real power to legislate, because it lacked the executive force to compel obedience to its laws. The national credit and self-respect had disappeared, and it was feared by the friends of human liberty throughout the world that ours was but another, added to the long list of fruitless attempts at self-government. The nation was evidently upon the brink of ruin and dissolution, when, some eighty years ago, many of the wisest and most patriotic of the land met to seek a remedy for the great evils which threatened to destroy the great work of the Revolution. Their sessions were long, and often stormy ; for a time the most sanguine doubted the possibility

of a successful termination to their labors. But, from amidst the conflict of sectional interests, of party prejudices, and of personal selfishness, the spirit of wisdom and conciliation at length evoked the Constitution, under which we have lived so long.

It was not formed in a day, but was the result of patient labor, of lofty wisdom, and of the purest patriotism. It was at last adopted by the people of all the states—although by some reluctantly—not as being exactly what all desired, but as being the best possible under the circumstances. It was accepted as giving us a form of government under which the nation might live happily and prosper, so long as the people should continue to be influenced by the same sentiments which actuated those who formed it, and which would not be liable to destruction from internal causes, so long as the people preserved the recollection of the miseries and calamities which led to its adoption.

Under this beneficent Constitution the progress of the nation was unexampled in history. The rights and liberties of its citizens were secure at home and abroad ; vast territories were rescued from the control of the savage and the wild beast, and added to the domain of civilization and the Union. The arts, the sciences, and commerce, grew apace ; our flag floated upon every sea, and we took our place among the great nations of the earth.

But under the smooth surface of prosperity upon which we glided swiftly, with all sails set before the

summer breeze, dangerous reefs were hidden which now and then caused ripples upon the surface, and made anxious the more cautious pilots. Elated by success, the ship swept on, the crew not heeding the warnings they received, forgetful of the dangers they escaped in the beginning of the voyage, and blind to the hideous maelstrom which gaped to receive and destroy them. The same elements of discordant sectional prejudices, interests, and institutions, which had rendered the formation of the Constitution so difficult, threatened more than once to destroy it. But for a long time the nation was so fortunate as to possess a series of political leaders who, to the highest abilities, united the same spirit of conciliation which animated the founders of the Republic, and thus for many years the threatened evils were averted. Time and long-continued good fortune obliterated the recollection of the calamities and wretchedness of the years preceding the adoption of the Constitution. Men forgot that conciliation, common interest, and mutual charity, had been the foundation and must be the support of our government—as is indeed the case with all governments and all the relations of life. At length men appeared with whom sectional and personal prejudices and interests outweighed all considerations for the general good. Extremists of one section furnished the occasion, eagerly seized as a pretext by equally extreme men in the other, for abandoning the pacific remedies and protection afforded by the Constitution, and seeking redress for possible future evils in war and the destruction of the Union.

Stripped of all sophistry and side issues, the direct cause of the war, as it presented itself to the honest and patriotic citizens of the North, was simply this: Certain states, or rather, a portion of the inhabitants of certain states, feared or professed to fear, that injury would result to their rights and property from the elevation of a particular party to power. Although the Constitution and the actual condition of the government provided them with a peaceable and sure protection against the apprehended evil, they preferred to seek security in the destruction of the government, which could protect them, and in the use of force against the national troops holding a national fortress.

To efface the insult offered our flag; to save ourselves from the fate of the divided republics of Italy and South America, to preserve our government from destruction, to enforce its just power and laws, to maintain our very existence as a nation—these were the causes that compelled us to draw the sword.

Rebellion against a government like ours, which contains the means of self-adjustment, and a pacific remedy for evils, should never be confounded with a revolution against despotic power, which refuses redress of wrongs. Such a rebellion cannot be justified upon ethical grounds, and the only alternative for our choice is its suppression, or the destruction of our nationality. At such a time as this, and in such a struggle, political partisanship should be merged in a true and brave patriotism, which thinks only of the good of the whole country.

It was in this cause and with these motives, that

so many of our comrades gave their lives, and to this we are all personally pledged in all honor and fidelity. Shall such a devotion as that of our dead comrades, be of no avail? Shall it be said in after-ages, that we lacked the vigor to complete the work thus begun? that, after all these noble lives freely given, we hesitated, and failed to keep straight on until our land was saved? Forbid it, Heaven, and give us firmer, truer hearts than that!

Oh, spirits of the valiant dead, souls of our slain heroes, lend us your own indomitable will, and if it be permitted you to commune with those still chained by the trammels of mortality, hover around us in the midst of danger and tribulation, cheer the firm, strengthen the weak, that none may doubt the salvation of the republic and the triumph of our grand old flag!

In the midst of the storms which toss our ship of state, there is one great beacon light, to which we can ever turn with confidence and hope. It cannot be that this great nation has played its part in history; it cannot be that our sun, which arose with such bright promises for the future, has already set for ever. It must be the intention of the overruling Deity that this land, so long the asylum of the oppressed, the refuge of civil and religious liberty, shall again stand forth in bright relief, united, purified, and chastened by our trials, as an example and encouragement for those who desire the progress of the human race. It is not given to our weak intellects to understand the steps of Providence as they occur;

we comprehend them only as we look back upon them in the far distant past.

So is it now.

We cannot unravel the seemingly tangled skein of the purposes of the Creator—they are too high and far reaching for our limited minds. But all history and His own revealed Word teach us that His ways, although inscrutable, are ever righteous. Let us then honestly and manfully play our part, seek to understand and perform our whole duty, and trust unwaveringly in the beneficence of the God who led our ancestors across the sea, and sustained them afterward, amid dangers more appalling even than those encountered by His own chosen people in their great exodus. He did not bring us here in vain, nor has he supported us thus far for naught. If we do our duty and trust in Him, He will not desert us in our need.

Firm in our faith that God will save our country, we now dedicate this site to the memory of brave men, to loyalty, patriotism, and honor.

BENEDICTION.

May the God of our fathers and our God succeed with his divine benediction the solemn and interesting services of this occasion. May He conduct, by His gracious providence, the work commenced to day to successful completion. May the monument here to be raised in honor of the illustrious dead, inspire with all the ardor of a sound Christian patriotism the soldiers of our common country, here trained for its defence; may it prove to them a constant remembrancer of their mortality, and keep alive upon the altar of their hearts the flame of devotion to God, to country, to the Union, the Constitution, and the immutable principles of truth and justice; and may the blessing of the triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you all. *Amen.*

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE Executive Committee, in behalf of the army, feel constrained to signify an expression of their appreciation of the interest manifested by the general public in favor of the Battle Monument.

Exclusiveness was at no time intended, and contributions have been gratefully received from all sources, but, from numerous inquiries, both personal and by letter, addressed to the committee, by those not connected with the regular army, it is felt that some misapprehension may have existed upon this point.

It is therefore deemed proper to make public the announcement that contributions are cheerfully received from all who feel an interest in this project.

Communications addressed to Prof. A. E. CHURCH, West Point, N. Y., will receive prompt acknowledgment.

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